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THE ERRORS
OF
THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

BEING
THE SUBSTANCE OF THREE SERMONS PREACHED
IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, MONTREAL,

BY
REVEREND JAMES CARMICHAEL.

Price 5 cents.

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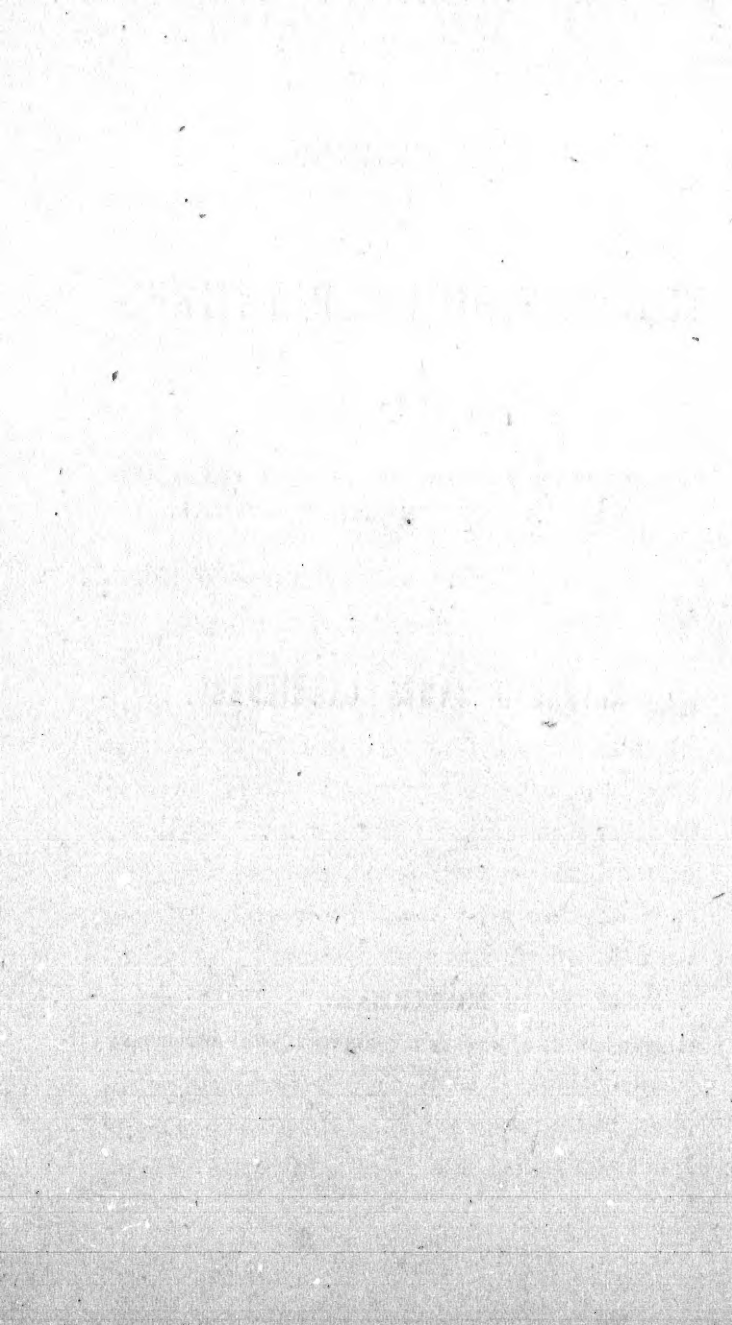
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SERMON.

Take heed what ye hear.—Mark iv., 24.

This sacred admonition has special reference to the preaching of the Gospel. It follows the parable of the sower. In that parable we are told the various ways in which men received the Gospel; but here we are told to use discrimination even in listening to the Gospel. We are warned in the parable of the sower to take care *how* we hear, but the warning of our text is of a different nature. It says: "Take heed *what* ye hear." Both warnings should ever be before us. We may hear with a great deal of attention, reverence and prayer; but if what we hear is not the gospel, or is a perverted gospel,

our hearing is of little avail. And then, again, a pure gospel may be preached ; but if we do not hear it aright, it is of little avail either. Both warnings should ever be before us, and if one should be stronger than another in the present day, it is that which says, " 'Take heed *what* ye hear."

I use these words with special reference to the earnest call lately given by those christians commonly known as "Plymouth Brethren," (a) to all godly people in all denominations to leave their respective bodies to join a religious organization in process of formation, not only in this city, but in various parts of Canada. We do this, believing that the time has come for doing so. We feel that there is a point at which Christian charity may be so overstrained as to really amount to a dereliction of

(a) I am aware that this body deny that this is their proper title. I therefore only use it as it is the title by which they are known by the public.

duty, and we do not wish to reach that point; for although "charity suffereth long, and is kind," it was never meant to suffer so long as to teach God's people to be unfaithful. Therefore, when we felt that some committed to us were likely to be led astray by the teaching of "the Brethren," we thought that true charity consisted, not in concealing, but in revealing, the host of errors which, in this case, lie behind what people call the simple preaching of the gospel of God. And here I would say that I cannot well express to you how deeply I feel the position I am placed in through taking the stand I am about to take against this body. From all I hear I dare not but believe that these preachers are religiously earnest in the work in which they are engaged; I am sure they are godly, christian, though mistaken men; and I know very well, that no matter how plainly I may speak of the doctrinal errors of the body with which they are connected, or however delicately I may in passing

allude to the preachers themselves, that some for whom I entertain no little regard and affection will feel, that I am endeavouring to injure the cause of Christ. May God grant, if any think so now, that in calmer and quieter moments of christian thoughtfulness their minds on this point may undergo a change, and that they may yet be led to see that justice should be rendered to those who contend for the truth of doctrines hoary with antiquity, as well as to those who propagate novel views with no slight measure of devoted earnestness and zeal. If these preachers confined themselves to the mere act of preaching Christ to perishing sinners, these words would never have been written ; but any one acquainted with the Brethren must know that the preaching of the word by them leads to the reception of peculiar doctrinal views, unlike those held by any Christian body. The convert is caught by those simple words, ever fresh, always lovely : " Come to Jesus, none but Jesus."

But when he comes, then the hidden mysteries of his belief are revealed—mysteries and doctrines that must be received, if the convert be really in earnest in his conversion.

Now it is to “these things which are behind” I would call your attention to-day; and I do so after the most serious consultation with my dear brother in the ministry, your long-tried pastor. We—for he speaks with me—we, I say, speak solely and alone from an earnest desire to preserve you, my brethren, from being led astray by doctrines, that from my heart and soul I believe to be opposed to the word of God.

It is no easy thing for an ordinary hearer of the gospel, as preached by members of this body, to discover all that it does believe. It glories in the fact that it possesses no creed, and hence the difficulty of any ordinary hearer defining distinctly what it receives, and what it rejects. But although it has no creed, the original

founder of the body and the leading minds connected with it have published works from which a creed may easily be compiled. It is in these books and tracts that we find their doctrines, and it is from these books or tracts I have taken the various extracts I will read to you to-night.

For regularity sake, I will divide my remarks into three heads. First. What the Brethren think of the Church and Christian bodies generally. Secondly. What dangerous views they hold and teach in connexion with the Old Testament. Thirdly. What dangerous views they hold and teach in connection with the New Testament.

I.

First. What do the Brethren think of the Church? The following quotation, taken from a tract written by a well-known female member, will give the reply. I have chosen to quote from this tract rather than from one by Mr. Darby on the sub-

ject of the Church, because this lady is a much plainer writer in every way than the founder of the body. Speaking of the views of the Brethren, she says: "Believing that the church of Christ is and can be but *one body*, the habitation of God through the Spirit, they deem that it ought to appear one body in its *visible manifestation on earth*—one body in which all believers in the Lord Jesus are baptized by one Spirit." (a) In other words, that the visible church on earth should be composed solely and alone of converted people, and that consequently a national church errs on the one hand, and all sectarian denominations on the other." (b)

Now, longing as I do to enter heaven, this view at first sight has something pleasing in it even for me—for if such a body were permitted to exist, surely it

(a) "Who are the Plymouth Brethren?" By Mrs. H. Grattan Guinness, page 13.

(b) Do. do., page 14.

would furnish no slight foretaste of heaven itself; but on mature thought, and after many an earnest prayer to God for light on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that such an idea is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ, and I know that the efforts of the Brethren to found such a body have proved a total failure.

If Christ wished such a Church to exist, why did He utter the parable of the tares and the wheat, or the net cast into the sea. I know that the Brethren deny that these parables have anything to say to the Church, but I am sure that any unprejudiced reader will admit that the parables refer to the kingdom of God on earth, and that that kingdom is identical with the Church. To understand these two parables, the question to settle is, what did Jesus mean by the expression "kingdom" so often used throughout them. That he did not mean his millennial kingdom is obvious, for the glory of that kingdom will be the absence of tares; that he did not mean the

grace of God in an individual's heart (Ro. xiv., 17) is equally plain, for our whole life should be spent in pulling up the tares there. We are, therefore, shut up to the conclusion that the kingdom referred to was the Church, and for the simple reason that the kingdom of Christ is represented in the Bible as being identical with the Church. Baptism is the seal of admission into the Church, and baptism is the seal of admission unto the kingdom (John iii. 5.) The Church has power to bind, loose, remit and retain, and the kingdom has the same power (Mat. xvi., 18-19.) The Church is the guardian of the gospel, and the kingdom is the guardian of the gospel (Matt. xiii., 19.) In short, the kingdom is the Church, and the Church the kingdom. Now, if this be the case (and I think it would be very hard to prove it is not), it must be plain to all that Jesus Christ never countenanced this idea of a church composed solely of believers. The tares were to be left with the wheat till the harvest, the fish were

not to be severed till brought to land, and the harvest is end of the world, and this work of severing will be in the judgement of a present personal Saviour, through his ministering servants, the angels of heaven.

But, not only is the idea opposed to Scripture, but the Brethren have failed to carry it out. "The wear and tear of reality has put their ideal of a Church to the test, and it has *fairly gone to pieces.*"(a) Once it was a compact body, composed solely of believers, without a break in its ranks, Now its ranks are broken; its body of believers split up into antagonistic parties, who not only will not commune together, but who speak in anything but a Christian way of each other. Indeed, as far as the Darby and Newton divisions are concerned, it is the old story of the "Jews having no dealings with the Samaritans." The history of the Brethren to the present

(a) Letter on Recognition of Pastors, by H. Grattan Guinness.

has been, "war to the knife" between the elected Saints of God.

Holding such views on the subject of the Church, it is only natural to suppose that their views, with reference to other Christian bodies, would not be of a very liberal nature, and we are not, therefore, surprised to learn "that the Established Church of England is an Apostacy (*a*), that it has no just claim to be considered a Church of God (*b*), and that Dissenters have marshalled themselves in the ranks of the Infidel and the Socinian, and are grasping at all the power and privilege that the world can give them." (*c*) These are very plain words. I would hope, indeed, that some of the gentler minds among the Brethren would shrink back from endorsing them. But here they are in black and white, and no doubt, I think,

(*a*) Separation from Apostacy, page 27.

(*b*) The Church of the Scriptures, page 1.

(*c*) Present Prospects, page 10.

can remain on our minds as to what prominent writers of this body believe us to be. It matters little that for long and many a year you may have enjoyed true spiritual life in the Church of England. The higher your spiritual blessings the greater your apostacy. It matters little either how others may have lived happily in other bodies, at best they are but props of Infidelity and supports of Socinianism. Hence arises the call to come out. Hence the frantic abuse lavished, lately, in this city, on every Christian body. Hence the solemn warnings against all ministers and pastors. Hence the narrow-mindedness, so unlike Christ, and so detrimental to that spirit of love, which is one secret of the Church's existence. Yes, I am not afraid to say it, that he who joins this body runs the danger of being forced to set his hand against every man. His sphere of Christian usefulness is contracted, and the genial, kind and generous spirit of Christianity for him is undermined. The

Church (the body of Christ) to him is composed of the select few who have been truly converted, and have come out from all sects. His conversion is likely to develop a haughty, dogmatical spirit in conversation,—a breaking up often of the fondest and dearest associations of the past, and an undisguised attempt to put any one down that dares to differ with him. In short, he is light, and all of us in various degrees of spiritual darkness.

Now I yield to no one in my devoted love for the Church of England. I believe that in doctrine she is divine, and in organization apostolic, but I would be very sorry, indeed, to say that no converted man could live a long and noble life to Christ outside of her pale, and I am perfectly sure that Christians not belonging to the Church of England would be equally sorry to say such a thing of their respective denominations. But these new preachers practically say this. They may strive to evade the accusation by replying “that there ar

many Christians amongst us, but that they ought to come out;" but their reply proves the accusation to be correct. If in the eyes of these preachers, the test of a man being a Christian in communion with the Church of England is his leaving the Church of England, it is plain they believe that no real Christian can *remain* a member of the church: and this, to my knowledge, is the result of their teaching. "How could I remain in the Church of England?" said a young convert to his Sunday-school teacher; "I am converted." Yes, this is one result of this teaching. All Christian bodies are as Sodom, and he alone is God's child who flies to Zoar.

II.

I will now direct your attention to the second division of this sermon, namely: "What dangerous views the Brethren hold and teach in connection with the Old Testament?" And, first, I would call your attention to their views on the Moral law.

In a well-known tract, entitled "A Scriptural Enquiry into the Law," &c., this subject is gone into, and the views of the Brethren are summed up in the following words. "The law is not the rule of the believer's life." Now no one is more willing to admit than I am that righteousness by law can never *save* me. I agree to a great extent with the Brethren that the "law of Love" is, and ever ought to be, the secret of the fulfilment of Christian duties; but I can in no way see that the law of love must of necessity exist apart from that Law which is God's moral standard for all his people. My love for Christ and through Christ makes the Law—God's loving rule of life for me as his child. I take it as the rule of my Christian life; as a Christian man, I am to love God with my heart and soul, and my neighbour as myself. The terrors of the law to me are buried in Christ, the wise statutes of the law remain behind for me to strive to obey through love, and therefore to tell me

that the law is not my rule of life, is little short of disconnecting morality from religion. But such a view is not only opposed to the interests of morality ; it is opposed to the voice of Scripture. These preachers may tell you that the freedom of the gospel demands a rejection of the Law. They may take these words, written by the finger of God—written for man—for all time, they may take these words, I say, and fling them from them as unworthy of their advancement in religion. But I call on you to cling to Christ and his Apostles on this question. “ Think not,” says Christ, “ that I am come to destroy “ the law and the prophets. I am not come “ to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever shall “ break these commandments, and *teach* men “ so, shall be least in the kingdom of heaven ; “ but whosoever shall *do* and TEACH them shall be great in the kingdom of heaven ; Yes, I call on you to cling to Christ on this question and to His Apostles. Do not forget, I say, that St. Paul said : “ I de-

“light in the law of God after the inward
 “man.” Do not forget, when men tell you
 that there is nothing naturally holy as a
 rule of life for the Christian in the Law,
 that the same apostle said: “Wherefore
 “the law is holy, and the commandment
 “holy, just and good.” And above, when
 men tell you that the gospel made void the
 Law, and did away with its necessity, don’t
 forget these words: “Do we then make
 “void the law? God forbid. Nay, we
 “establish the law.” O, brethren, repel
 such teaching—reject it. It is neither
 the voice or the mind of Christ. It should
 not be listened to without a shudder. It
 fully contradicts the words of our Lord
 and His Apostles.

It is with a like shudder that we should
 listen to the fact—startingly new to us,
 horribly opposed to all our ideas of God’s
 justice—to say nothing of his love, and
 yet asserted with no little dogmatism by
 this body—namely, that the Church of
 God does not appear in the Old Testament

Scriptures at all, and that such men as Abraham never did or never will belong to it. In a controversy between Mr. Grant and myself on the subject of the Church, Mr. Grant states "that the Church was not in existence, nor could be, till the death of Christ, and that in the Church Abraham has no part, nor could any saint have till the Holy Ghost came after the ascension of Christ" (a)

Now, first, let me show you the utter folly of the statement that the Church of God, "The Ecclesia," does not appear in the Old Testament scriptures at all. We naturally appeal to the Jewish ecclesiastical polity; but we are told very ingeniously and dogmatically that we cannot produce a text in the Old Testament in which that body is called "the Church" in the same sense that the word is used by St. Paul. Now, I can produce at least twenty-three texts where the word is used — not, indeed,

(a) "The Kingdom and the Church," page 9.

in our translation, but in the original text. The founder of this sect is very fond of quoting from the Septuagint or Greek translation of the scriptures. Now, in the Septuagint wherever the word "congregation" or "assembly" occurs, you may translate it Church. For instance, when Joshua read the law before the "congregation," or Moses spoke in the ears of the "congregation"; Joshua read and Moses spoke before Ecclesia, "the Church." Indeed, if I counted how often the word "Ecclesia" is used in the Old Testament, and then pursued the same course with the New, I am fully persuaded that I would find that for once it is used in the *New Testament*, it is used twice in the Old." So much for that error.

But there is something revolting in the error which arises out of this assertion. A more monstrous idea I never heard broached, than that men like Abraham and David do not belong, or will not belong, to the Church or body of Christ. Again, I ask you to cling to Christ and his apostles on

this subject. Foremost amongst the examples of saving faith held out to us as Christians stands this very Abraham. However Christians may strive to degrade him, the voice of the greatest apostle ever inspired by God has sealed his *perfect*, his *undoubted* salvation and heavenly glory in these words: "These all—(Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and others)—these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, for they desired a better country—that is a heavenly—wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." Now, if Abraham died *in faith*, if he was *persuaded* of God's promises, if in the strong language of the apostle he *embraced them*, if his longing ardent desire was after a *heavenly HOME*, and that God was not *ashamed* to be called his God, is it not a *monstrous assertion* that he should be in a less close position to Christ hereafter

than I or any Christian man who lived after the Pentecostal effusion? Nay, is it not in direct opposition to Scripture; "Know ye not," says the apostle (in the third of Galatians), "that they which are of *faith*, the same are the children of Abraham, for the Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through *faith*, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying that in thee shall all nations *be blessed*; so they which be of *faith* are *blessed with faithful Abraham*." Can words be stronger? The same gospel that saves me was preached by God to Abraham, and he believed it, as I believe it; and if I, as a faithful man, am to be blessed at all, it is not *away* from Abraham, but **WITH** him, "for they which be of *faith* are blessed **WITH** faithful Abraham."

I now come to my 3rd division.

III.

What dangerous views the Brethren hold in connection with the New Testament. And I would first call your attention to that view which limits the work of Jesus Christ as a Saviour altogether to the few hours he lay extended on the cross. The following words expressive of this idea are brought out very clearly in a Plymouth periodical, entitled, "Things New and Old," "we believe (says the writer) that Christ's sufferings for sin, his suffering as the sinners substitute were exclusively confined to the cross. (a) The same idea is elaborated in these words, taken from Mr. Mackintosh's revised notes on Leviticus, pages 58 & 59. He is commenting on these words: "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." This he writes "was entirely "sympathetic, the power of fellow feeling

(a) Quotation taken from tract "Test before you Trust." Page 4.

which in him was perfect. There is therefore a manifest difference between Christ suffering as a voluntary sympathizer with human misery, and his suffering as the sinner's substitute."

According to this teaching Jesus Christ for full thirty-three years was little more than a loving gentle teacher, who felt, and that deeply, for the sins and sorrows of his fellow creatures. Felt as you might feel when the drunkard crosses your path, or when entering the homes of the poor, you witness their struggle for life and the many hardships they are forced to endure. He was not *yet* the sinner's substitute when he said to the outcast "Neither do I condemn thee." He was not *yet* the sinner's substitute when in the garden of Gethsemane, he wept and prayed and suffered, and angels came to comfort him. May 'twas but the sympathy of the saint, not the work of the substitute, that was confined to the cross

I meet this view as it has often been met

before at once with Scripture. Surely nothing can be plainer than that Christ suffered for us as much in life as in death. St. Peter tells us (1 Ep. ii., 24.) that "Christ in himself bare our sins in his own body *up* to the tree. (a) St. Peter tells us (Heb. iv., 15.) "That he was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin," and nothing but the wildest infatuation, or the most determined desire *not* to believe Scripture can evade the force of these well known words, "Surely he hath *borne* our "griefs and *carried* our sorrows. He was "wounded for our transgressions. He was "bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement "of our peace was upon him, and by his "stripes we are healed." Here thro' life he is represented as bearing and carrying our sorrows, and the bruising, the chastisement of Herod and Pilate previous to his crucifixion, are described as a portion of that

(a) See Margin Bible.

healing which alone can make us acceptable to God.

Why the Brethren hold such a view, arises from another error which I would now speak of; namely—their denial of the doctrine of the Imputed Righteousness of Christ. Of course that doctrine is based on the fact that Jesus was our sin bearer in *life* as well as *death*. We claim all that Christ has done in life and death. We hold that he obeyed God's law thro' life, and atoned for sin in death, and that, that obedience constitutes the Christian's righteousness, or as Scripture expresses it, "That God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. v., 21.)

Now let me give you a few extracts on this subject from a well known Plymouth tract by Mr. Stanley, entitled, "Imputed Righteousness." "It is remarkable (he says) that the scriptures never use the expression imputed righteousness of Christ,"

(page 1,) and again, "The thought of
 " Christ having kept the law for me, and that
 " it is imputed to me for righteousness would
 " be utterly wrong, for this would only be
 " making me righteous on the principle of
 " law keeping, which God says is im-
 possible," (page 6.)

Now let me show you the weakness of these two statements. The writer says that the expression, imputed righteousness of Christ, is never used in Scripture. I know that the writer of these words believes in the doctrine of the Trinity; but the word Trinity is not to be found in the Scriptures. Yes—it is replied, but the doctrine called by that name is there. Well, so with imputed righteousness, the doctrine is in the Bible tho' the title is not. Here is the doctrine in one short text out of many, (a)
 " As by the offence of one (Adam), judgement came upon all men to condemnation,

(a) See also 1 Cor. i., 30-31. Jer. xxxiii., 16. Rom. iii., 21., &c.

even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus Christ), the free gift came upon all men to justification of life," (Rom v., 18.)

With reference to the second quotation, namely: that the doctrine of imputed righteousness "makes me holy on the principle of law keeping which God says is impossible," I would only say, and that with sorrow, that such a statement is a mere trick, or trap of words. God says very distinctly that *I* cannot be made holy thro' keeping the law for myself, but he never said that I could not be made holy thro' Christ keeping it for me. So far from doing so he tells me "That Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one* that believeth, (Rom. x., 4,) and again, "for as by one man's (Adam's) disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ), shall many be made righteous, (Rom. v., 19). Here Adam's disobedience to law is represented as made up by Christ's obedience to it.

As to what the Brethren believe on the

subject of what constitutes a Christian's righteousness, it is very hard for an outsider to decide, as they are undecided amongst themselves. All agree that whatever righteousness we possess it is not Christ's righteousness through law keeping, but beyond this their views on the subject are so chaotic and contradictory that every man's hand is against his brother. Out of these many views, that held by Mr. Bell, is to my mind the most striking, I can only call it *boldly blasphemous* ! It is to be found on the 15th page of his tract entitled, "Cease ye from man." In commenting on the 3rd chapter of Romans he says, "The righteousness spoken of here is evidently the righteousness of the Godhead, that essential attribute" Now there can be but one meaning given to these words, namely : that the Christian is made holy in God's eyes, by being made in some respects as God. In the commonly received doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of the *man* Christ is put to the ac-

count of *men*. This is reasonable, man in the person of Christ obeyed the law for man, for "by one *man's* obedience many were made righteous, (Rom. 5-9). Nay writes Mr. Bell, "it is not the righteousness of the man Christ, but the righteousness of the Godhead." I leave you these words to think over my friends, I can never read them without naturally thinking of Satan's lie to our first parents, "ye shall be as Gods."

The next dangerous view held by the Brethren worthy of notice is that with reference to Repentance. In a tract by Mr. Mackintosh entitled, "Repentance unto life, what is it,"? after stating that the general definition of repentance is "A hearty sorrow for sin, and a sincere desire to forsake the same" (a) he says of that definition always received by the Christian Church. "That a more fearfully mutilated marred, or depressing Gospel could not be conceived." (b) He

(a) Page 1.

(b) Page 4.

then states with no little recklessness, "that sorrow for sin can never be produced by looking at sin or its consequences." (a) "That the way to get pardon, is not by renouncing sin, or being sorry for it, or forsaking it, but by receiving the stupendous truth that sin is put away." (b)

Now, here again there is a trick of words. Every Evangelical Christian knows, that no man gets pardon on account of renouncing sin, but yet the renunciation of sin is as necessary a part of man's action in connection with pardon, as the reception of the stupendous truth that sin is put away. When the Brethren preach, however, they practically carry out Mr. Mackintosh's theory. They call on all sinner's on the spur of the moment to stand up and declare their perfect conversion. A man may be aroused to a

(a) Page 5.

(b) Page 7.

knowledge of sin by their words, but if he does not cast away from him all lingering sorrow for his sin, he is told that he is a lost or ruined soul, or if in humility he says, "I hope I am saved," he is consigned to the same fate. (a) Now it was not thus the Apostles preached, although they lived in an age of miracles, when the Holy Ghost was poured out publicly, and with a special power. St. Peter made the distinction between repentance and conversion in the most marked manner, when he spoke to the Jews, in Solomon's porch. (Acts 3) He accused them of murdering Christ and killing the Prince of Life, and he closed with these words "repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Surely the sense of the Apostle is plain enough. They were to repent of the sin of murdering Christ which he had charged them with, and to acknowledge him as

(a) A fact capable of proof.

their Saviour, but the repentance was to precede the acknowledgment.

Again, take the case of Simon, who offered Peter money, in order that he might buy divine powers. (a) That the man had never been thoroughly converted to God is plain, for St. Peter told him he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." But how did St. Peter treat him? He did not then preach Christ to him, but he used these words, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if, perhaps, the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Will Mr. Mackintosh tell us that St. Peter "mutilated, marred and depressed" the Gospel when he gave the wretched Simon this advice? or that St. John did so (1 John, 1—9) when he wrote, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" or that the Wise-man

(a) Acts viii.

did so when he said, (Prov. xxviii., 13,) "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy?" or the Psalmist when he said, (xxxii., 5,) "I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin?"

Brethren, such a view may bring comfort to a few hearts. There may be some so constituted that they can lay hold of Christ without feeling the pangs of conscience strongly, simply because they have never been great sinners. But to say that the drunkard, who has desolated homes and ruined souls; the vile, immoral man, who has only lived to gratify lust; the murderer, whose hands have been dyed with blood; the infidel, who has trodden the Son of Man under foot,—to say that such men can be saved without ever being sorry for their sins, and confessing them to God, is to upset the whole plan of salvation, as far as *man* is concerned, and to open the floodgates of wickedness on the Church itself.

Another dangerous view, I would mention, is as follows: That it is wrong to address God, the Holy Spirit, in prayer, or to pray for the Holy Spirit. Here are a few extracts from a Tract of the Brethren on the subject. "If the Spirit be addressed in prayer, or in hymns, the rational consequence is *almost blasphemy*." Again, "if you pray for the Spirit, you virtually deny that you are Christ's." Again, "the Spirit having been given, it is mockery to ask God to repeat the gift." Again, "Dear Brethren, prayer for the Spirit is unscriptural." (a)

Much as I wish to refrain from harsh language, I am forced to say of this view, that it is not only dangerous and unscriptural, but that it is undeniably heretical. If the Holy Ghost is God, as truly as the Father or the Son, and that we are told to

(a) Pages 6, 7, 8 of a Tract, fully quoted by Mr. John Cox, in his Tract, "The Holy Spirit and Prayer."

pray to God, it is rank heresy to say that we should not pray to the Holy Ghost. If it is almost blasphemy to pray to the third person in the Trinity, what recipe can the Brethren give us for avoiding this act of blasphemy in our ordinary prayers. When, in praying, I commence with the simple words, "My God ;" and at the close of the prayer, say, "O, merciful God, grant me these petitions for the sake of Jesus Christ," how can I avoid the act almost of blasphemy? It is true that there are three persons in one Godhead, expressed by the word God, but when I use that word I must address the Spirit who forms a part of that Godhead. I can see no way, then, to avoid the act, save by leaving the word "God" out of my prayers altogether.

Now, let me expose this view from Scripture. We are told it is wrong for a Christian to pray for the Spirit. The argument of the Brethren shapes itself thus: "Every child of God is a temple of

the Holy Ghost. He *has* the Holy Ghost, therefore to pray for His influence is a lack of faith, and foolishness—because when he prays thus the Spirit in him prays for the Spirit.” What saith the Scriptures in reply to this theory? Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Corinthians. In the opening of that Epistle St. Paul addresses the members of that Church “as sanctified “in Christ Jesus,” and he thanks God “that in everything they were enriched “by Christ, and that the testimony of Christ “was confirmed in them.” These words prove that those addressed by the Apostle were Christian people. Well, of course, you remember the prayer with which he closes that Epistle. It has three requests or petitions in it,—“The grace of our Lord “Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and *the* “*communion of the Holy Ghost*, be with “you all, Amen.” Now, no one, we think, can deny that this is a prayer. It means, “May the Triune God give you, my people, more of the grace of Christ, more

of the love of God, more of the Spirit's communion, and if this be so. St. Paul prayed for more of the Spirit for those who were already enriched by Christ."

But there is one general answer to this assertion. There are certain Christian gifts or graces which proceed from the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (Gal. v., 22.) Now when St. Paul prays that "the love of the Philippian Christians may abound more and more" (Phil. i., 9) and that the Christians at Colosse might receive "more wisdom, and spiritual understanding (Col. i., 9), and that the Lord might make the Thessalonian Christians," to increase and abound in love one towards another" (1 Thess., 3—12), these are practically prayers not only for more of the Spirit, but to the Spirit. The Brethren may not make such prayers. They may teach, that in making them we approach the border land of blasphemy, but we feel little anxiety about

our position. We do what the great Apostle of the Gentiles did. If our prayers are "almost blasphemy," so were his. We stand, or fall in this respect with St. Paul.

Now, friends I will sum up these views. The Brethren glory in the fact that they have no creed. I have gone to no little trouble through reading their tracts, and the many answers to them, (especially those by Dr. Carson and Mr. Cox,) to compile one for them, and although I know such a compilation will be useless to them as a body, I trust it will be useful to you and others in warning you against them. The creed runs thus:—

I BELIEVE that the Church is composed of believers. I BELIEVE that we constitute that Church. "I BELIEVE that all professing Christians outside of the Church are connected with Apostacy, Infidelity and Socinianism, that no denomination owns the spirit of God. I BELIEVE that the Moral law is not the rule of Christian

life. I BELIEVE that the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness through law keeping is nowhere taught in Scripture. I BELIEVE that Christ during his life did not really and actually suffer with, or for, his people. I BELIEVE that it is almost blasphemy for a Christian to address the Holy Spirit in prayer, or to pray for the Spirit in any shape or way; and I BELIEVE that Abraham has no place in the Church, nor could any Saint have till the Holy Ghost came after the Ascension."

These are the fundamental doctrines of the Plymouth creed, there are a few other clauses not of such vital importance, which I will just mention :—

I BELIEVE that the Sabbath was ordained for Jews alone, Christians never had anything to do with it. I BELIEVE that the choosing of Pastors is a daring encroachment on the authority of the Holy Ghost, and finally I BELIEVE that it is lack of faith for a Christian to pray the Lord's prayer, or in any way to express

the thought contained in the words "forgive us our trespasses."

Brethren, I have endeavored to compile this creed as fairly and as kindly as I could. As a rule it is composed of literal quotations from the published works of the Brethren. Here then is their creed and this is what you are asked to believe. You the members of this Church, and indeed the members of all Churches have been implored to fly from error, to embrace Christ. Embrace Christ! these are lovely words brethren, in themselves, and yet in this case I would implore of you to shrink back from the embrace. Embrace Christ through this Body and, these are the things you must believe. These are the things which lie behind the plain preaching of the Gospel. These are the reserved doctrines which meet you face to face when initiation is over, and practical Church teaching commenced. Is it any wonder then that we as your spiritual guides whilst giving these preachers all the

credit due to them for piety, fervour and zeal, should ring on your ears the words of my text, "Take heed *what* ye hear,"—Nay, be just to us. If in our consciences we believe the Brethren hold these views, and that we did not open your eyes to them, then indeed you might condemn us, justly and righteously you might then condemn us. But surely, never for doing our duty in the sight of God and for your souls safety. But even if you did, we could not be silent, for our Saviour's glory we must maintain the spirit of his teaching. We cannot—dare not, allow a false idea to go forth unrebuked, as to what He said and taught on these important matters. Hear then I ask you, our earnest pleading against error and for the truth, and may God in his love and mercy maintain his own cause, and preserve each one of you from error for Christ our risen Lord and Master's sake.